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# Monthly Newsletter

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## Regional news

### E-commerce Find Its Place in Central Asia

Over 900 trade deals valued at more than \$126 million have been facilitated through a trade portal, started by a UASID project in 2002. The trade portal [www.smetradecenter.net](http://www.smetradecenter.net) was launched through the USAID Enterprise Development Project to promote Central Asian regional trade by helping identify new markets for businesses. The project has provided off-line trade consulting services to enhance commercial linkages both within Central Asian countries and internationally. The trade portal provides an online space where enterprises or trade specialists acting on their behalf can post offers to buy and sell products and services. These offers can be viewed by website visitors, and buyers and sellers are able to contact each other for negotiations. As of November 2006, the website had over 5,000 registered users, an average of 109 trade leads posted per month, and over 182,000 visitors from 120 countries visiting the website monthly. When the USAID Enterprise Development Project ended in late 2006, USAID announced a tender to transfer the trade portal to a private entity; since April the trade portal is operated by a Kyrgyz IT company iTeg.



Victoria Timaeva and Alexander Zadorozhny of iTeg Company hope to double the current 3,000-5,000 website visits by early 2008. Photo: iTeg

### USAID Facilitates Dialog among Region's Medical Universities

On June 20 representatives from the region's medical universities gathered for a conference in Dushanbe, supported by the USAID ZdravPlus project. Participants from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan developed and discussed universal standards applicable to all CAR medical universities and did a mock accreditation for the Tajik Sate Medical University. These standards will help ensure high quality of the teaching process and will form a good basis for medical institutes, academies, and universities that strive to achieve equal standing with other medical training centers around the world. ZdravPlus has been working with the region's Council of Rectors and other legislative bodies since 2005 to bring medical accreditation standards for medical institutions in line with the international standards.



Medical university staff worked on uniform accreditation standards for their schools. Photo: ZdravPlus

## Kazakhstan

### Senate Staff Explore U.S. Assistance to Kazakhstan

In May, staff from the Office of U.S. Senator Richard Lugar met with several USAID project implementers and USAID-supported NGOs as part of a worldwide study to examine how U.S. assistance is implemented and coordinated in the field.



Senate staff met with volunteers and visitors of the USAID-supported Youth Power Center. Photo: USAID



The staff, Paul Foldi and Marik String, attended a roundtable discussion with representatives from NGOs Counterpart International, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Junior Achievement, ARGO Civil Society Development Association, Junior Achievement, and the Kazakhstan Public Policy Research Center. The staff also met with Freedom House, Chemonics, ABA/CEELI, the International Republican Institute, and the International Democratic Institute. A highlight of Mr. Foldi and Mr. Marik's visit was a tour of Almaty's Youth Power Center, managed by Population Services International, to observe results of a successful USAID HIV prevention program for at-risk youth.

### **Households and Specialists Receive Information on Avian Flu through USAID Programs**

Over 600 veterinary inspectors and laboratory directors from each of the country's 14 oblasts have been trained through a USAID-led initiative in Avian Flu surveillance, bio security, and rapid reporting. The initiative was launched by developing a cadre of 35 country-wide veterinarian and laboratory diagnostician trainers who later on led country-wide training. The USAID program also pre-tested, modified, and disseminated community level Avian Flu public awareness materials to 8,000 households and 272 community (rayon level) administrative posts in the Pavlodar Oblast, which served as a home to the USAID Avian Flu pilot. The Ministry of Agriculture will now fund printing and distribution of these materials in the rest of the 13 oblasts of the country. Training and communication materials are being adapted and used in other training activities within the Central Asian region.



USAID helped train Kazakhstan's veterinarian specialists in diagnostics of infection among domestic fowl. Photo: USAID

## **Kyrgyzstan**

### **Kyrgyz Farmers and Machinery Producers Learn About Quality Agricultural Equipment**

On June 7, 2007 Jayil Farm in Alekseevka village became the stage for the country's first outdoor agricultural equipment show. The initiative was organized by the USAID-funded Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development Project (KAED) in collaboration with the German company AMAZONE. This show aimed to link Kyrgyzstan's agro-industrial companies, cooperatives, and farms to the producers of agricultural machinery and to demonstrate modern agricultural equipment. The field show was opened by representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, USAID, and the project. Farmers, specialists from agricultural cooperatives, financial institutions, international organizations, and technical service companies participated in the show that showcased advanced technologies of sowing and harvesting, compliant with the highest requirements of modern agriculture.



Demonstration of the equipment in the field. Photo: KAED

The KAED project works on the advancement of input market development in northern Kyrgyzstan and integrates agricultural input markets countrywide. The project stimulates growth in Kyrgyzstan's agricultural output by promoting private-sector investment in agricultural input technologies and marketing.

### **The USAID-Supported National Scholarship Test Enjoys a Record Number of Participants**

Over 34,000 students, more than in the previous years, took this year's National Scholarship Test for Government stipends for higher education. The test was created with USAID assistance in 2002 to provide a fair and transparent way for Kyrgyz students across the country to compete for the opportunity at



university education. This year the test was conducted in 89 locations throughout the country; a separate testing center was organized for every 500 students. Fifty-seven students with the highest scores received the right to be enrolled in any state university without competition.

The National Scholarship Test is currently organized and conducted with partial funding from USAID by the Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods, which was created in 2004 by USAID to design and organize such tests. Universities note that students that were enrolled with high test scores also show high academic performance.



Every year, thousands of students compete in their aptitude during the Kyrgyz National Scholarship Test. Photo: CEATM

**Electricity Loss Reduction Addressed at a Regional Forum**

In June the Regional Markets Assistance Program for Central Asia (REMAP) organized the Regional Electricity Loss Reduction Forum in cooperation with the Government of Kyrgyzstan. More than 50 participants from different countries confirmed during the event that high technical and commercial losses are a significant barrier to energy sector development. Representatives from Armenia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and the USA shared experience of loss reduction activities and examined the methods to mitigate technical and commercial losses for Kyrgyzstan. Representatives from Kyrgyzstan regional distribution companies also presented loss reduction case studies. It is estimated that Kyrgyzstan misses approximately \$50 million of revenue per year due to distribution electricity losses. At the end of the forum the Deputy Minister of Energy and Fuel Resources requested that energy companies to initiate actions to reduce loss by the end of 2007.



As a part of its assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan, USAID implemented several electricity loss reduction demonstration projects. Photo: USAID

**Tajikistan**

**Law and Civics Courses Begin at Islamic University in Tajikistan**

This autumn, the Tajik Islamic University in Dushanbe will include courses on law and civics as part of its regular university curriculum, thanks to a cooperative effort between the university and the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA/ROLI), with funding from USAID. To launch the initiative, ABA/ROLI provided instructors and materials to train 70 university professors in the fundamentals of constitutional structure, legal status of individuals and citizens, organization and activities of state power bodies, public organizations and their legal status, and the participation of religious organizations in public life. This will enable the Tajik Islamic University to develop a civics education course as a permanent part of its regular curriculum. The university has long been eager to include civics education in its curriculum. During the summer the ABA/ROLI with funding from USAID and other donors will also conduct a civics summer camp for 60 Tajik Islamic University students.



Inaugural training series in April 2007 for professors of Tajik Islamic University. Photo: ABA/ROLI



**USAID-supported Drug Demand Prevention Curricula Adopted by Tajikistan’s Police Schools**

In late April instructors of the Tajikistan’s Police Academy and the Primary Police School of the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in the training of trainers on the Drug Use Prevention Curricula in Dushanbe. The curricula were originally developed by the USAID-funded Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) for the country’s vocational schools; recently, they were adopted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to include in the police force training program. Through the training of trainers seminars, DDRP and its implementing partner the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation are helping the two police schools develop cadre of instructors to teach drug use prevention course. Participants noted that it is essential to introduce the “Drug Use Prevention” course in the police schools to bring up a new generation of skilled police and to break down existing prejudices about drug addiction.



DDRP training introduced participants to new methods of teaching drug use prevention curricula. Photo: DDRP

**USAID Trains Medical Professionals on the Safe Motherhood Strategy**

Recently, USAID’s ZdravPlus project conducted a seminar on family-centered prenatal care and birth preparation for obstetricians-gynecologists, midwives, and family doctors from the primary health care facilities at three USAID-supported pilot maternity hospitals in Dushanbe. Such trainings facilitate the implementation of the Safe Motherhood Strategy in Tajikistan. Over the past year, USAID’s project trained 75 health providers from the three facilities in Dushanbe on evidence-based delivery attendance practices. The trainings, which are based on the World Health Organization’s Effective Perinatal Care materials, help introduce antenatal care practices with the focus on the needs of pregnant women and their families. They also ensure complete and consistent safe motherhood processes at the pilot facilities.



During trainings, nurses learn to focus their work around the needs of pregnant women. Photo: ZdravPlus

**Turkmenistan**

**U.S. Government Supports National Measles/Rubella vaccination Campaign**

In June USAID through CDC provided a \$600,000 grant to UNICEF for the support of the Government of Turkmenistan’s national Measles/Rubella vaccination campaign. The campaign has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). The delivery of 1.15 million doses of vaccine is expected at the beginning of November. Additional 1.7 million doses, procured through UNICEF with funds from the Government of Turkmenistan, will be delivered in August 2007. The initiative will enable the Government to implement a new schedule of vaccinations in Turkmenistan, which started in January of 2007 for all children and women of reproductive age.



Last December, USAID funded a measles vaccination campaign in Uzbekistan. Photo: USAID



**USAID Trains Nurses in Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses**

Over the past eight months, USAID’s ZdravPlus and Healthy Family projects trained 237 nurses from all five country’s welayats on Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI). The series of trainings aims to improve primary health care provided by family nurses. The issue continues to be important in Turkmenistan as nurses are often the first point of contact within the health care system, especially in rural areas. Each training consists of a six-day course with practical sessions in counseling and interpersonal communication skills to facilitate work with patients and their families. Pre and post-training tests show that nurses increase their knowledge of IMCI by an average of 30%. Nine more rollout trainings for nurses will be conducted through September 2007. IMCI trainings in Turkmenistan have been widely successful due to coordination among the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, WHO, UNICEF, and the two USAID projects.



Nurses are often the first point of contact within the health care system. Photo: ZdravPlus

**Nearly 9,000 Students Learned Business Skills from Junior Achievement during the 2006-2007 School Year**

On May 24 the USAID-supported Junior Achievement program in Turkmenistan marked the official completion of the school year and summarized its achievements. During the 2006-2007 school year, nearly 9,000 students and 400 teachers participated in Junior Achievement programs. Most active teachers and students, including the winners of “The Banks in Action,” “The Best Economic Teacher of 2006-2007,” and the Management and Economic Simulation Exercise competitions received awards and certificates of appreciation. The Junior Achievement programs are approved by the Ministry of Education as an official elective course and are the only course on market economics available to Turkmenistan’s students.



At the year-end ceremony, Junior Achievement awarded winners of its competitions. Photo: Junior Achievement

**Uzbekistan**

**Nine Uzbek Farmers Visit the United States**

Recently, farmers from various water user associations in Bukhara and Samarkand Regions spent three weeks learning about water management and farming at the University of Alabama (Huntsville). The exchange visit was organized by the USAID Community Connections Program. The group visited local agricultural farms, farming cooperatives, irrigation projects, and the State Farmers Federation. The program also offered cultural component, including visit to Washington, group outings, field trips, and weekend get-togethers with host families. Upon return each participant will develop a personal plan on how they will attain higher crop yields through more efficient use of water resources and improved administrative system of their water users associations.



Farmers discuss program schedule prior to their trip to the U.S. Photo: Holis Consult Ltd.